

Meeting Notes

February 1, 2002

10:00 – 12:30

Attendance

Council Members:

Paula Hammond, Chair, Department of Transportation
Reg Clarke, Washington Association of Pupil Transportation
Liz Dunbar, Department of Social and Health Services
Glen Hallman, Consumer Representative
Michael Harbour, Washington State Transit Association
Andrew Johnsen, Governor's Transportation Policy Advisor
Allan Jones, Alternate, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction
Doreen Marchione, Hopelink, representing CTA-NW and the Washington Association of Community Action Agencies

Legislative Members:

Staff members:

Don Chartock, ACCT	Cathy Silins, WSDOT
Gordon Kirkemo, WSDOT	Brandy Tiller, WSDOT
Debra Mendoza, ACCT	Jeanne Ward, ACCT

Welcome and introductions

Paula Hammond welcomed everyone to the meeting. The council and audience members introduced themselves.

Meeting notes from ACCT August 3, 2001

The council approved the December 7, 2001 meeting notes.

Council Member Reports *Council*

Mike Harbour informed the council that Intercity Transit is currently working on two WorkFirst grants.

One of them will place vehicles in low-income housing developments to be used by residents to make WorkFirst related trips.

He pointed out that there is a continuing problem with providing transportation in the rural areas of urban counties and counties that have substantial urban populations. Mike explained that rural funding goes to counties that are totally rural and urban funding gets devoted to the urban parts of the urban counties. Therefore, the rural parts of the urban counties are left out. They are seeking funding to address this issue.

Glen Hallman announced that on March 12, 2002, Whatcom County will be voting on a sales tax increase for its transit.

Glen gave an overview on the Whatcom Transportation Summit Meeting. Glen will provide copies to the council, of the recommendations and consensus emerging from the summit. There was involvement by businesses as well as government agencies.

Legislative Session Report *Council and Staff*

Don Chartock gave an update on the status of the following ACCT bills:

Senate Bill 5739

Senator Gardner introduced this bill last year, but it did not pass. She brought it back this year. It states that the legislature recognizes that the state has a responsibility to address transportation needs of persons with special transportation needs. This bill is currently up for floor vote in the senate.

Senate Bill 6444

Senator Gardner introduced this bill. It would allow transportation options for people who are prone, but do not require medical attention. Currently they must travel by ambulance. The bill will allow for the use of a stretcher van, at a lesser cost. The council voted to support the concept of this bill at the December ACCT meeting, which was held in Vancouver.

Don gave a summary of positive testimonies that were given at last week's hearing.

Doreen Marchione gave an update on House Bill 2287. The bill would prevent transit systems from contracting out for services unless that contractor pays the prevailing union rates and benefits. This would be harmful to non-profit organizations and other community transit organizations. Testimony at yesterday's hearing pointed out that there are providers other than the major for-profit companies that are doing this kind of transportation.

Paula stated that legislators are thinking more and more that any new revenue for transportation may go to a vote of the people rather than a vote in Olympia. There are two regionalism bills that have both passed their respective houses and will now go to a conference committee for resolution. Each would allow regional groups, counties or some regionally formed body to have a local option tax which would then be referred to the voters. The timing of all of these referendums to the voters will be very interesting for all who are trying to get additional revenues.

Mike Harbour informed the council of the senate hearing last week on the Governor's budget, which says money for public transit services will be handled as a grant program. WSTA has expressed concern with grant programs. It is difficult to have reliable on-going service if it is tied to grants. There are also concerns with administrative costs associated with grant programs. Mike explained that WSTA prefers dollars to be allocated directly to public transit systems so the system can implement services and know the services will still be there in two years.

Budget Update *Jeanne Ward*

Jeanne informed the council that ACCT is spending according to plan, probably even under-expending. She stated that there is still money in reserve for demonstration grants later in the biennium; one for the Medicaid coordination projects and another for schools. A summary of the county community grants was included in the ACCT meeting packets.

Medicaid Transportation Program *Liz Dunbar, Tom Gray & Paul Meury*

Liz Dunbar introduced Tom Gray from Medical Assistance Administration and Paul Meury, Lead Transportation Program Manager.

The Medicaid Transportation Program is designed to ensure access to medical services for Medicaid eligible people who have no other means of getting to medical appointments.

Medicaid is the federal "final" safety net for persons who qualify on the basis of income, age or disability, and is for individuals who have no other way of paying for medically necessary services.

Washington Medicaid expenditures for medical services are approximately \$3 billion this year, and are expected to increase about 10% per year.

Medicaid assistance provides transportation services through transportation brokers. The current model is known nationally as one of the best because it provides low cost and effective transportation services. The system covers all 39 counties and is broken in to 13 contracted areas. There are 9 brokers that serve these 13 contracted regions. Brokers range in size of approximately 20,000 trips up to 800,000 trips per year. The brokers ensure access to medical services by providing non-emergency, non-ambulance transportation. Currently in medical assistance administration there are approximately 870,000 eligible clients. Brokers authorize approximately 39,100 weekly trips, which adds up to over two million trips per year. The average cost per trip, approximately 15 years ago, was over \$30 per trip versus \$17.31 in the year 2000.

Coordination

Through the brokerage, there is a single point of entry for Medicaid clients. There are toll free lines for access and statewide standards for broker operations. Flexibility and good use of judgment are encouraged on the part of the brokers.

There are also inter-agency agreements throughout DSHS to ensure coordination of services. Coordinating transportation efforts are being developed between DSHS, DOT, OSPI, and others.

Mike Harbour pointed out that the reduction in costs per trip that Medicaid has experienced is largely due to the movement of trips to public transit; from 10% in 1990 to 36% today. For example, if a Medicaid client gets a Paratransit ride from a transit system, Medicaid pays 75 cents. If Medicaid bought the same rider from another vendor it would pay \$30 to \$40 per trip. The flip side of this is that the public transit systems in the state provide those trips at \$25 – \$30 per trip and receive 75 cents for that trip from Medicaid. This increasingly puts a burden on the transit systems.

Tom Grey explained that federal regulatory requirements have made it difficult to resolve these concerns, that affect the local transit and the Medicaid transportation system. There is a lot of confusion and it is difficult for some of the local coalitions to understand the constraints that Medicaid faces.

Gordon Kirkemo informed the council of the plans for putting a workgroup together to look at ways for Medicaid and other providers to coordinate. A consultant will be hired to facilitate and lead the work group.

WorkFirst Transportation Initiative *Janet Abbett, Jeanne Ward & Council*

Jeanne is not yet in a position to make a recommendation to the council regarding the \$6 million earmark for the Job Access Grants. The match requirement is 50%. The WorkFirst initiative team has been exploring options for getting match. They have asked the existing grantees what their capability is to come up with match. Various options are being explored. FTA has not released the 2002 application guidelines. It may be necessary for Jeanne to contact the council by email or conference call before April, if a recommendation or vote of the council is necessary.

These funds must be obligated within three years and the match can come from any source except federal DOT funds.

December Meeting with Oregon, follow-up *Paula Hammond & Council*

ACCT and the Oregon Coordination Council met on December 7, 2001 in Vancouver, Washington. Paula Hammond stated that the joint trip planner project, which was discussed at the meeting, contains some features that would be beneficial to ACCT. At the meeting, both groups committed to keep in contact and to have another coordination meeting in the future.

Washington/Oregon Workshop

Staff from both states are planning a joint transportation summit to explore opportunities for coordinated transportation across borders. Jeanne attended a follow-up meeting on January 16, 2002 to start the planning for this event. Another meeting is scheduled for February 6, 2002. The goal is to address coordination issues that affect both states. The target audience is people who are providing human services, health services, transportation services, or advocating for clients. When the two coordination councils meet, after the summit, they will have some very concrete things to discuss, such as proposals, recommendations, or possible law changes.

The summit is to focus on the following three topics:

- School/Head Start/Community Transportation Coordination
- Transportation Across Borders
- Non-emergent medical transportation as part of a coordinated system

The workshop will be held at a location along the Columbia River between August, and November, 2002.

Spokane LIFTS Project *Terry Zeimantz*

Terry Zeimantz, the coordinator for Project LIFTS, (Life Plan Improvement and Feasible Transportation Services) in Spokane, stated that LIFTS was the first implementation project funded by ACCT this biennium. The coalition in Spokane found that a key barrier in obtaining transportation is access to information.

LIFTS is an information-mapping program that maps service locations and transportation routes. Service locations include childcare, adult care, social services employment, and training, housing, and basic needs outlets. These are found to be the top travel destinations of the special transportation needs population. LIFTS will allow communities to get information to people, to do analysis to support the best use of transportation dollars, and to identify the most appropriate entity to take care of a transportation problem.

Features and Benefits of LIFTS

- Offers one stop shopping
- Alternatives can be visualized immediately
- Participants and their assistants are empowered to choose from alternatives
- Community resources may be optimized and duplications minimized
- Gaps in services may be identified and addressed more quickly

Examples of the maps were included in the ACCT meeting packets. These show service locations that are close to bus routes. Participation forms are used to tailor information on service locations to the needs of each individual. Three different major entities have verbally agreed to share databases to better serve the community.

The first phase of LIFTS focuses on the urban population in Spokane. They are looking at connecting the rural and urban routes with partners from other ACCT counties, such as Rural Resources in Pond/Orielle County, People for People in Grant, Adams and Lincoln Counties, Special Mobility Services in rural Spokane County, and COAST in Whitman County.

The Spokane County GIS Department has provided them with a geo-coded map of the community, since the transit system wants to increase ridership on the fixed routes in the urban area. Hopefully by 2004 the project will be on-line, giving interactive support to the general public.

Jeanne stated that Spokane will apply for a JARC grant that will help get the project on line sooner and provide the ability to focus on the people who need to get to work, and work related services.

Communications Plan Status Report *Stan Suchan & Council*

Paula Hammond introduced Stan Suchan, Communications Manager for the Department of Transportation's Public Transportation and Rail Division. Stan stated that the council approved the communication plan at the last ACCT meeting. The first steps of the plan are now being implemented. One step was developing a brochure. Stan presented the final proof of the brochure to the council and requested that any last minute comments go to Jeanne. The brochure should be printed within the next week.

As this brochure is produced, the same information will be translated in different ways for slightly different audiences. For example, the program overview briefing paper will have more details than the brochure does. The overall messages will also appear on the ACCT web site.

Stan gave examples of some tools located on the website to provide assistance in telling the ACCT story. These stories will be use in outreach efforts with legislators, communities, and the media.

The brochures will be available at the next council meeting. Other products are due by the end of June; however, due to an urgent need they are moving as quickly as possible. The pieces that have been completed and approved can be viewed on the web site by jurisdiction.

The approval process is taking some time. These are complex issues that vary from community to community. When something is published it will be usable and accurate.

The Department of Transportation has been completely revamping its website and there is now a section that is tailored to commute and travel information. A new section, that should be active within a month, will list the transportation providers in a community. For the first time it will be integrating accessibility and special needs transportation information. Customer testing will be conducted to see how it works. A link to the Department of Transportation website will be provided.

Pierce County, Introduction as our "Featured County"

Jeanne Ward & Tim Payne

Jeanne Ward introduced Tim Payne, Chair of the Pierce County Coalition. Pierce County will be a featured county every month on the ACCT agenda. The purpose is to give the ACCT Council the opportunity to see and hear from one county to get a feel of what it's like to work through the various coordination issues: coordinating resources, identifying and overcoming barriers. The coalition may need support or direction from the council at times.

The Pierce County Coordinated Transportation Coalition is a diverse group voluntarily working together with the vision of providing mobility for the entire community, so that no one has to depend on a personal automobile unless they choose to do so.

The mission of the Coalition is to develop coordinated transportation services and a program that achieves increased efficiencies and provides enhanced mobility and accessibility to a greater number of residents, particularly those with special transportation needs.

Currently, many social service programs that serve the elderly, children, poor, and people with disabilities either operate independent transportation programs, or have no transportation at all. The result is either:

- Duplication in transportation services; or
- People with unmet transportation needs.

Through coordination, public and private transportation services can be provided more efficiently; therefore offering more rides to more people at a lower cost per trip.

The three main objectives of the group are:

- Inventory the current transportation resources and assesses existing gaps and needs in Pierce County.
- Develop a preferred coordination model and system requirements.
- Provide an implementation and evaluation plan for the preferred coordinated transportation model.

A copy of the first of three documents on a coordinated transportation plan for people with special transportation needs in Pierce County was included in the ACCT meeting packet. A draft coordination model was put together and presented to the executive committee. The executive committee is made up mostly of decision makers from the organizations represented within the coalition. Currently there are over seventy organizations represented within the coalition. The executive committee has asked for more detail on the concepts and design ideas, which are very complex. Pierce County has launched in to another phase of coordination: awareness, advocacy and action (AAA).

Awareness

A Pierce County Website is currently being developed. This will enable people to access information on coalition activities. There will be a new directory of services for Pierce County. A spring forum is also planned. At least two overall forums will be scheduled annually. Forums will bring people in the community together to discuss progress and issues.

Advocacy

There has been lobbying in the state legislature for particular actions. A letter to State Representative MaryAnn Mitchell was included in the ACCT packets.

Action

To develop the county's coordination model, specific pilot programs will be tried. One will look at coordination between public transit and the medical assistance administration. MAAs broker in Pierce County, Paratransit Services, will work with the coalition to find some common ground for a coordination of services and a cost-sharing model. A method to track dollars, will give the funding organizations confidence that the money is being spent for their purposes, and not to support someone else's program.

The coalition will bring specifics to the April 5th ACCT council Meeting.

The Coalition is working with the Peninsula, Clover Park, and Bethel school districts within Pierce County to find opportunities to coordinate with pupil transportation. Preliminary meetings with Bethel and Clover Park have taken place and a meeting is scheduled within the next couple of weeks with Peninsula School District.

Tim anticipates having a full-fledged implementation plan as early as June. The goal is to have one-stop shopping in Pierce County.

Work Plan Status Report *Jeanne Ward & Don Chartock*

Don Chartock incorporated the comments from the last council review of the work plan. Don also included all of the ongoing projects, with comments on how work is progressing.

Audience Comments

The council decided that the ACCT meetings will continue to be held 10:00am – 12:30pm.

Marlaina Lieberg submitted her letter of resignation to the council. Jeanne sent letters to community organizations and advocacy groups inviting them to identify potential candidates to replace Marlaina on the council. The Governor's Office will make the appointment. We hope to have a new member by the April 5th council meeting.

Lynn Moody from Hopelink, informed the council of their new coordination project with Harborview Hospital. Currently, as the Medicaid broker in King County, Hopelink runs approximately 200 trips per day in and out of Harborview and the adjoining medical offices. The project will result in better control over the flow of traffic in and around the hospital, a smoother trip for the patient, and

benefits to providers and hospital staff. The location for picking up and dropping off non-emergency patients is very congested. Harborview staff were getting ready to go out for bids to resolve this problem. A decision was reached collectively that it would be more beneficial to work with Hopelink, which already has contracts with the providers that transport people to and from Harborview. Hopelink will station a staff person at Harborview. The hospital and Hopelink will share the staffing costs. The Pioneer Clinic will put up some start-up money, and they will buy equipment and furnish the work area for the staff person. This project will help improve the patient's experience. Harborview is also working on changing the time of day of discharges. This will help to facilitate transportation. Transportation for discharges is more readily available earlier in the day rather than late afternoon.

Meeting adjourned

Decisions by the Council

The council approved the December 2001 meeting notes.

The council agreed to keep the ACCT meeting times at 10:00AM – 12:30PM.

Next regular council meeting

Friday, April 5, 2002
10:00–12:30

DOT Commission Board Room (1D22)
310 Maple Park Avenue, SE
Olympia, Washington 98504-7387

For questions regarding grant administration, policy and council activities, contact Jeanne Ward, ACCT Administrator, at 360-705-7917 or wardje@wsdot.wa.gov. For information on meetings, agendas, materials, and clerical issues, contact Debra Mendoza, ACCT Secretary, at 360-705-7922 or Mendozd@wsdot.wa.gov.